DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 734 RC 013 282

AUTHOR Boloz, Sigmund A.
TITLE The GLAD Project: Energizing Language.
PUB DATE [81]
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; Demonstration Programs; *Language Arts; *Language Experience Approach; Primary Education; *Program Descriptions; *Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS *Ganado Public School District AZ; *GLAD Project

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the utility and limitations of traditional curriculum and of present language programming for its mostly Navajo population, the Ganado Public School District developed the GLAD (Ganado Language Arts Development) project, which aims to: develop literacy in kindergarten through third grade students; expand and enrich the pedagogical competencies of staff members; and develop communication with parents. The child and his values and experiences are central to the project's methodology, which emphasizes prewriting activities that stimulate motivation for writing, collection of impressions, and production of rough drafts. Teachers provide a supportive learning environment and situations which promote positive self concepts and encourage the children to be active participants in their education and to freely express themselves and their values. The school supports teachers in their efforts through writing seminars held twice a month and the classroom support network which emphasizes hands-on demonstrations in the classroom and intra-classroom visitations by teachers and administrators. Parents are kept informed of their child's involvement in the writing process through work taken home and class publications. Major writing projects developed within the various classrooms are formally published and redirected into the classroom as supplemental reading materials and into the young authors' homes. (NQA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED214734

The GLAD Project: Energizing Language

by Sigmund A. Boloz

[1981]

Ganado Public Schools
Ganado, Arizona

RC 013282

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sigmund A. Boloz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

National attention continues to be focused on the development of language programming for the non-native speaker of English and on the status of writing in our schools. While it is the right of all students to be afforded the opportunity to augment and refine their abilities to communicate, questions are raised concerning the universal appropriateness of traditionally accepted instructional materials and of presently available language programming. Concurrently, the pedagogical importance of composition is being rediscovered and indications are that this long overlooked basic has tremendous potential as a teaching technology.

The purpose of this article is to present an overview of a model school program which is attempting to facilitate the acquisition of communication skills in non-native speakers of English through the development and refinement of their writing skills. Although the ideas expressed in this article, generally, have strong implications for augmenting language programming at the elementary school level, and specifically have their roots in a program which serves a predominately Navajo students population, the ideas can be adapted to any cultural group and to any level of education.

BACKGROUND

The Ganado Public School District is located on the northern Arizona portion of the Navajo Reservation. Each student

who enters the school system, brings a set of unique values which the school district feels must be respected and integrated into his educational environment. Consequently, in 1979 *Native American Literature* was introduced into the curriculum at the junior high school level as a demonstration English project. This project's emphasis was directed at improving traditional English language skills through an emphasis on the child's existing cultural values and experiences. The acquisition of these skills was facilitated through the Project's philosophy that:

THERE IS A NEED FOR EACH CHILD TO BE HEARD

> *"A child will only learn to use a language if he has the opportunity to use that language. A child will learn to read a language if he finds meaning in that language. A child will learn to write a language if he finds that others find meaning in his work."* [Boloz, 1980]

The reactions of parents, students, and staff to this innovative program were so favorable that the concept was adapted and adopted into the curriculum of the Primary School.

THE PROGRAM

In the Spring of 1981, a demonstration writing project was formally made a component of the curriculum at Ganado Primary School. The project called GLAD, an acronym for the Ganado Language Arts Development program, has three primary goals. Those are: (1) to develop the foundation for literacy in each of its kindergarten through third grade students; (2) to expand and enrich the pedagogical competencies of each staff member in the teaching of the Language Arts; and (3) to develop and strengthen parental awareness of and support for school programming.

A sound language arts curriculum is an essential component of a good school program. In shaping the direction of student learning and in guiding the student's development of the crucial literacy skills, the GLAD project recognizes the utility of traditional curricula. However, the project also realizes that traditional texts could only partially serve the needs of its population.

While the ultimate aim of the project is English language literacy for all students; the child, his cultural values, and the experiences which the child brings to the school environment are central to the project's methodology. Focusing on each child as an individual, the GLAD project begins at each child's functional level. Writing as a system is suited particularly well for this type of individualization and no commercial language programs can be more relevant to the child than his own set of experiences.

The role of the teacher in this project is to provide a supportive learning environment which promotes a positive self concept and provides situations which encourage the child to be an active participant in his education and to freely express himself and his values. In doing so, the teacher's emphasis is directed towards prewriting activities.

The prewriting phase of the writing process is stressed in the GLAD project because this phase provides students with several experiences essential in promoting good composition. These are: (1) the motivation for writing; (2) the collection impressions; and (3) the production of rough drafts.

Whether the motivation for writing is a Navajo radio commercial, a live animal, or a cartoon, the GLAD project presumes that the ideas, emotions, and opinions of the student must be stimulated. This motivation must be followed by the opportunity to collect impressions where students are encouraged to share words and ideas with both their peers and teachers. This provides each student with a successful experience and promotes expansion of ideas and new vocabulary. Finally, the project stresses experimentation with language in the form of rough drafts and their importance to later composition.

In addition to the quality of the prewriting activities, the GLAD project believes that the writing environment influences the quality of student composition. The writing environment promotes composition by being free of extensive critical evaluations, by being sensitive to the student's cultural set, and by providing the students with frequent and varied writing and publishing experiences (e.g.: translating Navajo radio commercials, writing scripts for filmstrips, compiling journal entries, writing cinquain, or developing multi-media presentations).

Although a sound language arts curriculum provides a rich source of guidance, one can not presume that all who utilize the curriculum will bring to its implementation the same level of pedagogical competence. The GLAD project recognizes this reality and attempts to expand and enrich each staff member's competencies through a systematic series of writing seminars and a classroom support network.

The writing seminars are held twice a month and include

research findings, methodology, and the disemination of project results. All staff members are invited to the seminars and both teachers and administrators share the responsibility for the presentation of materials. The classroom support network emphasizes hands-on demonstrations in the classrooms and intra-classroom visitations by teachers and administrators. However, these services must be requested by the staff member.

While both staff and curriculum development bear directly on the success of the program, the GLAD project also strives for parental awareness of and support for this language arts approach. The project realizes that parents can have the greatest influence on a student's school success. The project, therefore, attempts to keep parents informed of their student's involvement in the writing process. Communication lines are developed through traditional means such as the taking home of work. This particular form of communication is supplemented by the distribution of class publications.

The publications are made possible through the school's budget. In this way, the school has accepted the responsibility for the formal publication of the major writing projects developed within the various classrooms. Once completed, these publications are redirected into the classroom as supplemental reading materials and into the homes of the young authors. This usually creates an intense demonstration of pride on the part of both the student and the parents and thereby increases the interest of both, in the school and its programming.

CONCLUSION

The tremendous potential of writing has long remainded untapped by our schools. However, writing as a system has strong implications for the development of language programming for the non-native speaker of English.

Recognizing the utility and limitations of traditional curriculum and of present language programming for its mostly Navajo population, one school system has developed a model program which integrates composition in all content areas. This model, called the GLAD project, has three major goals. The project aims to promote literacy, develop pedagogical skills, and to open communication lines with parents.

Central to the GLAD project's methodology is the child and the unique set of values and experiences which are brought to the school environment. It is presumed that student achievement follows active participation of the child in his own education and that teachers have the central responsibility to provide a supportive environment which promotes the strengthening of a positive self concept. Essential to this methodology is the role of prewriting activities which stimulate in each child the expansion of ideas and language development.

Schools can not assume that all teachers possess univeral pedagogical skills or that all parents will support programming without communication. Schools have the responsibility to actively support teachers in the effort to provide a quality program through the establishment of an on-going inservice program. The GLAD project has done so through its twice monthly writing seminars and with the implementation of its classroom support network. Schools further have the respon-

sibility to open communication lines concerning their school programming and to solicit parental support for that programming. One meaningful method in which communication can be fostered is through the publication of major classroom projects which can then be disseminated to parents.

Writing is only one of the processes of human communication. Nevertheless, it is a communication process that must be actively taught and fostered if we, as educators, are to help facilitate a generation of individuals, be they non-native or native speakers of English, to become literate and creative in their dealings with their world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boloz, Sigmund A. and Foster, Carl G., "Energizing the English Curriculum for the Non-Native English Speaker," Reservation Schools and 95-561, Dine' Teacher Corps Project, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1980.

Frank, Marjorie. If You're Trying to Teach Kids How To Write, You've Gotta Have This Book! Incentive Publications, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, 1979.

BLANK PAGE
DO NOT FILM